

**Wheathampstead Parish Council
Rights of Way & Commons Committee
11 July 2011, 19.30h**

Present	Councillors	T Reason A Brewster D Davies D Hills D Johnston	Chairman
		M Carter E Cornell P McNeill	Countryside Management Service Parish paths
		Julia Warren	Clerk
		Press	0
		Public	0

2023-11 Apologies & Substitutions

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Woodhams (personal) ,Cllr Brewster (late arrival – prior commitment) and Julian Thornton – Hertfordshire County Council’s footpaths officer.

2024-11 Questions from the Public

None

2025-11 Specific Declarations of Interest

None.

2026-11 Election of Vice Chairman

Councillor Brewster proposed, seconded by Councillor Davies, and agreed, Councillor Johnston as Vice chairman

Resolved To appoint Councillor Johnston as Vice chairman of the Rights of Way and Commons Committee

2027-11 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 14 April 2011 were approved.

Resolved: To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 April 2011 as a true and accurate account of the meeting and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

2028-11 Footpaths

Mr Thornton had advised that the absent kissing gate on FP51 would be replaced and tamper resistant fixing used on all gates. A full report would follow next meeting.

Recommended To note the report to Council

2029-11 CMS Matters

Mr Carter reported that the P3 grant for 2011 -12 was no longer available for production of the walking map as this project was funded in 2010-11. A project which more closely met the access to the countryside descriptor may yet meet approval. The chairman proposed and it was agreed to recommend that ROW fund the remaining £700 once branding had been agreed with Heritage Trail literature. This could come from the tree watering budget.

It was reported that the open day at the Local Nature Reserve on 28 June had been extremely inclement, but none the less well received by the public attending.

The chairman proposed and it was agreed to recommend that the Local Nature Reserve be renamed Butterfield Nature Reserve. This would give it an identity and also make it more easily found. On previous years the area had been full of buttercups.

Recommended to Council

- 1 To note the report**
- 2 to note that the P3 grant for 2011 -12 was no longer available for production of the walking map. Recommendation ROW to fund remaining £700 once branding agreed with Heritage Trail literature**
- 3 to rename the Local Nature Reserve Butterfield Nature Reserve**

2030-11 Management Plan for open areas managed by the Parish Council

It was agreed that the management plan for areas managed by the Parish Council should be more detailed and also fit more closely with National and Hertfordshire County Council's Biodiversity Action Plan. Bower Heath, Gustard Wood and Marshalls Heath were all County Wildlife Sites, and at Butterfield Road the Local Nature Reserve (see Minute 2029-11 above). The committee, together with Mr Carter, would attend a site visit on 16 August to walk and assess areas and inform a revised management plan. Mr Carter would provide existing county management plan descriptions, Mr McNeill to contact the Hertfordshire and Middlesex Wildlife Trust in connection with the Meads. Members noted that management would vary dependent upon site, and even within site. Three variables to be considered but weighted according to locality – natural wildlife biodiversity,

accessibility and visual attractiveness.

Consideration was given to the footbridge across the River Lea. Councillor Reason to talk to Thames Water regarding refurbishment. A new bridge may be considered as a suitable amenity use for the willows compensation money – estimate to be sought.

The Forge colour was discussed as the paint purchased was not identical to the match pot. Agreed to obtain a second match pot. To confirm the colour and for this to be reassessed.

Members agreed the chairman's proposals

Cllr Brewster arrived during discussions of this minute

- Recommended to Council**
- 1 To note changes to the Management plan and arrange a walk about to inform a revised plan**
 - 2 Councillor Reason to contact Thames Water regarding possible refurbishment of the Meads footbridge**
 - 3 to obtain an estimate for a new bridge across the River Lea and that this be considered for use of the willows felling compensation money**
 - 4 to order a paint match pot to confirm colour of the Forge**

2031-11 Assessment of Management Changes to date and report

Current management was discussed and it was noted that parking was permitted on both Bower Heath and Old 16th Green and there was signage to this effect. Members agreed that this may encourage people who would otherwise park elsewhere to park on the acid heathland. The chairman proposed, and it was agreed, to recommend that the permissive parking signage be removed. Also at Bower Heath management had changed to cut the edges (to prevent scrub growth) and heathland in September with removal of arisings. Similarly Marshalls Heath would have arisings removed.

Melissa Field had had trees and scrub removed in 2010 and was currently kept mostly mown with a wide uncut area by the river and beneath the trees parallel to the Lower Luton Road. This however appeared messy and incorrectly suggested limited access. This to be the start point for the walk about. Consideration was given to recycling the dying oak tree as bench(es). A 'contractor' would need to be identified.

Mr Carter spoke of the Devils Dyke project to improve access by the removal of dead trees and some clearance of vegetation including holly. It was hoped bluebells would later flourish in less shaded conditions. Some hedge infilling was proposed. Tree work was scheduled pre Christmas with hedging in the spring. It was agreed that an article should be proposed for inclusion in the Pump, and local residents should be leafleted prior to commencement of works.

It was agreed that the PC would do work (hopefully with volunteers) to improve the entrance to the Dyke to coincide with the CMS work.

The chairman's proposals above were agreed.

- Recommended to Council**
- 1 removal of parking signs at Bower Heath & Old 16th Green**
 - 2 Autumn clearance and removal of arisings at Bower Heath and Marshalls Heath**
 - 3 if possible to recycle the felled oak tree at Melissa Field into a bench(es)**

- 4 to include an article about the Devil's Dyke project in the Pump**
- 5 to leaflet local residents prior to work commencing**
- 6 to work with volunteers to improve the entrance to the Dyke, to coincide with CMS work**

Cllr Hills and Mr Carter left the meeting.

2032-11 Crinkle Crankle Path

Quotations for a serpentine path along the west crinkle crankle wall had been obtained. The chairman proposed, and it was agreed, to recommend acceptance of Maydencroft Rural quotation for the serpentine path £3,375, subject to consultation with and permission from St Albans Diocese, King Edward Place Residents' Association and St Albans District Council tree officer

Recommended to Council **to recommend acceptance of Maydencroft Rural quotation for the serpentine path £3,375, subject to consultation with and permission from St Albans Diocese, King Edward Place Residents' Association and St Albans District Council tree officer**

2033-11 Other treework and maintenance including bin provision

It was reported that during summer months the litter bins by the Forge were below the necessary capacity. The contractor had advised that he preferred to check and empty more regularly - these bins being on his daily route, than to install more bins - under usual circumstances this would be say 3 bins partially filled compared to one full. It was noted that the physical state of a number of bins was poor, agreed to refer to Council (to do a 'bin audit as some came under Playing Fields Committee). A request to move the dog bin by the Cricket Club had also been received - this to be included in overall bin audit

Recommended to Council **1 To note the report**
2 To refer to Council a bin audit - litter and dog

2034-11 Local volunteer 'wardens'

The chairman proposed and it was agreed to recommend appointment of Mr McNeill as Meads Warden, and that a job description be agreed with him

Recommended to Council **The chairman proposed and it was agreed to recommend appointment of Mr McNeill as Meads Warden, and that a job description be agreed with him**

2035-11 Land registration report & parish mapping

It was reported that some the process of registering Council owned land was being progressed. Parish Mapping was not as user friendly as had been hoped.

**Recommended To note the report
to Council**

2036-11 Review of Expenditure 2010-11

The chairman proposed and it was agreed to note the report circulated

**Recommended To note that report
to Council**

2037-11 Progress Against Village Plan Targets

It was noted that the following targets were in hand.
E7 Improve existing footpaths & provide all-weather paths
E8 Trees and bushes appropriately managed
E26 The River – pathway to open up access to river at Melissa Field
E29 Publicising walks – New Walking maps
L14 – Leisure facilities for Youth – new walking maps.

**Recommendation To note the report
to Council**

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 22.15h.

Dated this day of 2011

Chairman